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Dr. John Hendley Barnhart reported upon his visit to Europe during May, June, and July, including an account of the International Botanical Congress at Brussels, to which he was one of the Club's delegates. He also related some of his experiences and results in purchasing books for the library of the New York Botanical Garden and in a few hours of plant-collecting in the vicinity of Oberammergau.

Dr. P. A. Rydberg stated that for the first season in twenty-six years he had not collected a single plant, and in this connection he briefly reviewed some of his earlier field-work.

Adjournment followed.

MARSHALL A. HOWE,
Secretary pro tem.

OF INTEREST TO TEACHERS

KIPLING ON THE OLD HERBALISTS

In Kipling's Rewards and Fairies* is a musical poem, "Our Fathers of Old", which shows that Kipling must be familiar with some of the old herbals. The first stanza follows:

"Excellent herbs had our fathers of old—
Excellent herbs to ease their pain—
Alexanders and Marigold,
Eyebright, Orris, and Elecampane.
Basil, Rocket, Valerian, Rue,
(Almost singing themselves they run)
Vervain, Dittany, Call-me-to-you—
Cowslip, Meliot, Rose of the Sun.
Anything green that grew out of the mould
Was an excellent herb to our fathers of old."

As in Adam in Eden, "simply and gravely the facts are told"; yet after all,

"Wonderful little, when all is said,
Wonderful little our fathers knew.
Half their remedies cured you dead—
Most of their teaching was quite untrue."

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*Doubleday, Page and Co., Garden City, New York, 1910.

In the October issue (page 236) Professor Macoun's address was given as Ontario instead of Ottawa.

Teachers in the southwestern states will be interested in The Trees and Shrubs of San Antonio and Vicinity. This little booklet gives the woody plants of the region, with a brief, non-technical description, and a short paragraph on uses and habitats. There is no key, but, as the author says, any plant may be traced to the family by any general flora; and as the plants are grouped by families, its further identification is a simple matter. The common names are emphasized by being placed first.

Professor Bessey (*Science*, November 11) has made a new estimate of the number of species of plants "with which botanists have enough acquaintance to permit of their systematic arrangement and enumeration. The result is that roughly speaking we may say that there are now known about 210,000 species, distributed as follows: Myxophyceae (Blue Greens) 2,020, Protophyceae (Simple Algae) 1,100, Zygophyceae (Conjugate Algae) 7,000, Siphonophyceae (Tube Algae) 1,100, Phaeophyceae (Brown Algae) 1,030, Carpophyceae (Higher Algae) 3,210, Carpomyceteae (Higher Fungi) 63,700, Bryophyta (Mossworts) 16,600, Pteridophyta (Ferns) 2,500, Calamophyta (Calamites) 20, Lepidophyta (Lycopods) 900, Cycadophyta (Cycads) 140, Strobilophyta (Conifers) 450, and Anthophyta (Flowering Plants) 110,000.

An article on conserving the purity of the soil (*Science*, Oct. 21) by H. L. Bolley emphasizes the necessity of keeping soils, especially for cereals, in a sanitary condition. The author concludes with the following paragraph:

"If, on the other hand, you declare for careful seed selection in all cases, careful seed disinfection at all times, the formation of a well-aerated but compacted seed bed, and for as extensive a rotation of crops of as wide-spread character as possible, you of the new dry land regions of the west have the greatest possible opportunity to prove to the world that it is not necessary to lose a crop of such importance as linseed from among your rotations, nor is it necessary that your wheat yields should fall from the now promising ones of thirty to sixty bushels per acre to the general average of twelve to fifteen."

The May *Bulletin of the Torrey Botanical Club* contains an article by Harry B. Brown on the genus *Crataegus*, with some theories concerning the origin of its species. Prior to 1896 about one hundred North American species of *Crataegus* had been described; since then eight hundred and sixty-six species and eighteen varieties have been described. Three explanations might be given: that the early systematists were not careful workers; that the number of species has multiplied greatly recently; that the older species are hybridizing. Opinions from leading systematists are given. Mr. Brown thinks that the present different concept of species is responsible for part of the increase; and the rest may be accounted for by (1) the decrease in forested land and the consequent increase in the number of *Crataegus* plants now occupying the space and (2) by the fact that many of the present forms seem to be hybrids.

In the *Plant World* for July an unusual formation of adventitious roots is described by F. A. Wolf. "During a storm the trunk of this large hackberry tree had been split and the fallen portion was subsequently removed. At a point about eight feet above the ground and a little above the broken edge of the tree a cluster of fibrous roots were formed. Some of these grew to be over a foot in length and larger in diameter than a lead pencil." Mr. Wolf says that there "is no doubt that no such phenomena would be expected to occur in a normal healthy tree, yet this is not an adequate explanation for their formation. Certain it is that the vitality of the tree had been seriously impaired and it responded to this abnormal condition by a peculiar development of roots. It would seem, too, that such a growth might better be expected in a more humid region and not under semi-arid conditions such as prevail about Austin. This is one of the singular, natural phenomena the reason for which can only be a matter of conjecture."

The American Phytopathological Society calls attention to "two dangerous European plant diseases: the potato wart, caused by *Chrysophlyotis endobiotica* Schilb., and the blister rust of white pine, caused by *Peridermium strobi* Klebahn. The former has been discovered in Newfoundland. The latter has been widely distributed in nine of the United States and in the Province of Ontario, but is now believed to have been eradicated." The Society regrets that through the absence of any national regulation in either the United States or Canada both governments are powerless to prevent the continued introduction of these and other dangerous diseases, or their transference from one country to the other; and promises to support all legislation in both the United States and Canada looking toward the inspection, quarantine, or prohibition from entry of all plant material liable to introduce these or other dangerous diseases or pests. The Society feels the need of immediate action, as "every law of biology and all experiences with plant diseases and pests indicate that, in a new climate, with new varietal and specific hosts and with an entire continent in which to spread, both diseases will reach a degree of virulence unknown in Europe."

The *Outlook* for November 19 gives the Forest Service "estimate of the loss in the National Forests in Montana and Idaho due to the fires and hurricane of August 26 last. The estimate puts the total amount of destroyed timber at over six billion board feet, or between one and two per cent. of the total stand of National Forest timber, the area burned over exceeding one and a quarter million acres. This announcement has caused caustic comment by the opponents of the Federal administration of forests. Some attempt has been made to connect the matter with the 'New Nationalism', as showing that there is no necessity for such an issue of centralization. Apparently, in the minds of these critics, the fires would not have occurred if the forests had been State and not National Forests!" Drought, the quantity of inflammable material, the inaccessible character of the country, and unusually high winds all added to the difficulties faced by the not incompetent but *inadequate* forest service. A much larger sum should immediately be appropriated by Congress for this work.

NEWS ITEMS

L. H. Pennington, instructor at Northwestern University, has recently been made assistant professor of botany at Syracuse University.

The annual meeting of the American Society of Naturalists will be held (Dec. 28–30) at Cornell University. Dr. D. T. MacDougal will deliver the presidential address.

A drinking fountain, the memorial to Dr. James Fletcher mentioned some months ago in TORREYA, has been erected at the Central Experiment Farm, Canada.

Professor W. A. Henry, professor emeritus of agriculture of the University of Wisconsin, is planning to spend a year investigating agriculture in Europe.

Dr. William A. Cannon of the Desert Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution is spending a year abroad, visiting European botanical gardens and African deserts.

Dr. W. A. Murrill, of the New York Botanical Garden, has just returned from a European trip taken primarily to examine type specimens of fungi.

Dr. Ormond S. Butler (Ph.D. Cornell, 1910) has been appointed instructor in horticulture at the College of Agriculture of the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station.

Letchworth Park, the thousand acre park given conditionally to the state of New York in 1907, became the possession of the State upon the death of the donor, William Pryor Letchworth, on December 1.

The sixty-second meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the ninth of the "Convocation